

SPARC Looks Ahead to 2013

Club received grant in December, looks to expand reach to assist adults with disabilities.



Members of the Specially Adapted Resource Club, which provides opportunities for adults with disabilities, receive a \$15,000 grant from Life Circle Alliances Dec. 14. SPARC has a location at the Old Firehouse Teen Center in McLean and the Southgate Community Center in Reston. Photo Contributed

By **Alex McVeigh**

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The Specially

Adapted Resource Club (SPARC) came to McLean in October 2011 to provide opportunities for adults with disabilities in a community setting. Since then, they have been growing and gathering more support. They concluded 2012 with a \$15,000 grant from Life Circle Alliances and plan on further outreach in 2013.

“It was wonderful be able to receive such a show of support to help us continue our mission,” said Donna Goldbranson, president of SPARC. “They’re dedicated to long-term care initiatives, seniors and other adults with disabilities, so it’s nice to have a good relationship with them. Organizations like ours can use all the help we can get, to bolster areas that the county can’t fund in this day of reduced budgets.”

SPARC serves people with disabilities after they have graduated high school, when there are no other

government-funded options. The Old Firehouse Teen Center became the second center in 2011, after one was opened at the Southgate Community Center in Reston in 2006.

They currently serve more than 20 adults, who come in several times a week for activities and other opportunities.

Life Circle Alliances is a Fairfax-based nonprofit that assists adults with developmental, physical and intellectual disabilities.

Kay Larmer, vice chair of Life Circle Alliances said they are pleased to support SPARC.

“We know this investment will make a positive difference in the lives of many young adults with disabilities,” she said.

This year, SPARC will start an entrepreneurial effort with Pawsome, a brand of dog treat. SPARC clients will make the treat and they will be sold at the Reston and McLean Farmer’s Markets to raise funds for the club’s activities.

“We’re very excited for 2013, it’s going to be a big year for us in a lot of ways,” Goldbranson said. “We’re going to be reaching out, looking to make connections with students currently in school, finding out what they and their families have planned for after graduation. We’re always on the lookout for who needs services as well as other partners.”

SPARC will host their second annual fundraising golf tournament on Monday, June 17 at the 1757 Golf Club in Dulles. Proceeds will go toward buying adaptive sports equipment for physically challenged adults.

More information on SPARC can be found at www.sparcsolutions.org, and more information about Life Circle Alliances can be found at www.lifecirclealliances.org.

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